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ABSTRACT

This document discusses an evaluation of the Service Learning Program at Mount Wachusett Community College (MWCC). The study used a questionnaire that was previously designed to measure the extent to which the program objectives were being met by the students, faculty, and community partners of the Service Learning Program at MWCC. A total of 20 students, 16 faculty, and 20 community partners were randomly surveyed. The response rate was 40% for students, 81.25% for faculty, and 65% for community partners. Results indicated that the stakeholders of the program believed the service learning experience was of value and worth. Students commented on the importance of good communication and time management skills. Faculty indicated that students had the opportunity for real learning about life and work and practical application of the course curriculum. Challenges for the faculty included finding the time for additional tasks associated with the experience. Appendices include: (A) Formative Committee Members; (B) Summative Committee Members; (C) Introductory Letter; (D) Questionnaire; (E) Study Participant Consent Form; (F) Follow-Up Letter; (G) Second Follow-Up Letter; (H) Consent Form; (I) Summary of Evaluation; (J) Evaluation Form; (K) Summary of Findings Presented to Summative Committee; (L) Consent Form; and (M) Validation Form. (Contains 15 references.) (JS)

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EVALUATION OF THE SERVICE LEARNING PROGRAM AT MOUNT WACHUSETT COMMUNITY COLLEGE

History, Philosophy, and Practices of Adult Education

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A practicum report presented to Programs for Higher Education

in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of

Doctor of Education

Nova Southeastern University

November, 2000

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Abstract of a practicum report presented to Nova Southeastern University in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the Degree of Doctor of Education

EVALUATION OF THE SERVICE LEARNING PROGRAM AT MOUNT WACHUSETT COMMUNITY COLLEGE

by

Carol Reed

November, 2000

The Service Learning Program at MWCC has been in existence for three years. The director of the service learning program established yearly goals for the program. One of the goals for the 1999 – 2000 year was to evaluate the program for the first time. An evaluation questionnaire previously developed was administered. The purpose of the questionnaire was to determine the extent to which the program objectives were being met by the students, faculty, and community partners of the Service Learning Program at MWCC. A total of 20 students and 20 community partners were randomly surveyed. Since the stakeholders considered for participation were required to have completed a service learning experience during the fall 1999 semester, it was determined that a total of 16 faculty had participated. In order to obtain a sample size that was comparable, all faculty were selected. The rate of return for students was 40%, faculty returned 81.25%, and community partners returned 65%. Three attempts were made to insure the highest rate of return. The first attempt included an introductory letter, a consent form, a stamped, self-addressed envelope, and a questionnaire. The second attempt

included a follow-up letter, a consent form, a stamped, self-addressed envelope, and a second copy of the questionnaire. The last attempt included a telephone call placed to the individuals who had not returned the questionnaire. Individuals were encouraged to complete the questionnaire and were provided another copy upon request.

The results of the questionnaire determined that the stakeholders believed the service learning experience was of value and worth. Students commented on the importance of good communication and time management skills. They were able to reflect on how the needs of the clients were affected by their cultural and socioeconomic status. Faculty indicated that students had an opportunity for real learning about life and work and practical application of the course curriculum. Challenges for the faculty included finding the time for the additional tasks associated with the experience. Community partners specified that communication could be improved between those involved with the experience to insure that the goals of the project were clearly understood. They did see the experience as providing a service to the community partner and that students had the opportunity to work with different populations that might be their clients when they graduate from MWCC.

In summary, one of the missions of the community college is to provide services to the community to meet its needs. The service learning experience validated that it met this need. Evaluating a program such as this allows the stakeholders who had the most to gain and lose the opportunity to comment on their perception of the experience. The results of the evaluation can be shared with the administration of the college for financial support since many programs when they enter the fourth year of their existence find there is less financial support through grants. By publishing the results of the evaluation, this program could be used as a model for other

community colleges. The results of the evaluation would benefit others involved with the service learning experience.

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Chapter 1

INTRODUCTION

Mount Wachusett Community College (MWCC) is located in Gardner, Massachusetts with campuses in Leominster and Athol. It serves 29 cities and towns in North Central Massachusetts meeting the educational needs of students, businesses, and residents in the community. MWCC provides a number of services that assist students to be successful in their educational endeavors. The college offers to its students the opportunity to participate in the service learning experience as one of those services.

Nature of the Problem

The service learning program has been in existence since 1997. The program has grown since its inception and stakeholders have continued to support the program. There has never been a formal review of the program to determine if the program objectives were being met. The strengths and weaknesses of the program have never been identified.

Funding agencies and the administration of the college has supported the program financially. They have needed to know whether to continue providing financial support to the program. The expectation of these stakeholders is that the program should be validated and the process used to validate the program should be as unbiased as possible. Stakeholders have expected accountability from the representatives of the programs they support. One of the missions of the college is to provide support to the community. An evaluation of this program is one way to determine whether the community representatives have believed the college is supporting them.

A questionnaire was developed through an earlier project. The purpose of the questionnaire was to determine if the program objectives for the Service Learning program at

MWCC were met. The Director of the Service Learning program at MWCC participated in the development of the questionnaire and recommended that the questionnaire be used to evaluate the program.

MWCC has received grant money to operate the program. It is the responsibility of the director of the program to define the objectives for the 1999 - 2000 year for the service learning program. One of the objectives is to evaluate the service learning program. The problem is that the service learning program has not been evaluated.

The Purpose of the Study

The purpose of the study is to evaluate the Service Learning program at MWCC to determine how well the program objectives are being met. The evaluation will assist the service learning team members, the administration of the college, and the community partners to determine the strengths and weaknesses of the program.

Significance to the Institution

According to the President of the college (D. M. Asquino, personal communication, November 5, 1998), one of the goals for the college during the timeframe of 1998 - 1999 is to increase participation in the service learning program on the student's part. By examining the service learning program, it may be possible to make recommendations that will help accomplish this goal.

Relationship to the Seminar

This report directly relates to the History, Philosophy, and Practices of Adult Education seminar. Knowles (1980) expresses the opinion that evaluations have two purposes. It is important to determine the value and the quality of the program. MWCC is concerned with both of these factors as it conducts the evaluation on the service learning program.

Research Question

There are two research questions for this study. First, "How well does the program meets its intended objectives?" Second, "What is an effective strategy for evaluating the service learning program at MWCC?"

Definition of Terms

For the purpose of this practicum, the following terms need clarification.

Objective. An objective is defined as a standard or criteria upon which a decision can be made.

Program Evaluation. Program evaluation involves collecting information about a program so that decisions can be made about the program.

Service Learning. Service learning is a program that provides a learning experience to students through community service.

Chapter 2

REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

Introduction

Service learning is viewed in different perspectives. Some think of it as a form of experiential education while others think in terms of volunteering. Lisman (1997) says, "We want to create in our students a sense of moral and civic commitment that will enable them to see how to use their learning in the service of civic commitment that includes addressing the injustices associated with our democratically fragmented communities" (p. 5). Institutes of learning that have a service learning program need to evaluate the program at some point in time. Evaluations according to McNamara (1998) should be scientifically valid and provide relevance and practicality. Evaluations should be done on a regular basis so that feedback from stakeholders can be provided and the program can be continuously improved.

Why Evaluation is Important

Johnson, Johnson, Young, and Exley (1997) found that there are many reasons for conducting an evaluation for a service learning program. According to McNamara (1998) and Sonnichsen (1994), evaluation can determine the strengths and weaknesses of the program. Evidence can be supplied that supports the value of the program to stakeholders and funding sources (Jacoby and Associates, 1996). It is the belief of Hendricks (1994) that evaluation can prove service learning is a legitimate way for students to learn. McNamara (1998) indicates that evaluating a program determines that stakeholders' needs are being met and that the program objectives are being fulfilled. It can improve the program by implementing changes (Shadish, 1998; Dick and Carey 1985). The results of the evaluation can be used for public relations to support service learning in the community or as a benchmarking tool to compare to other

programs. The institute's management can consider what is the purpose of the program and whether to continue or end the program (Exley and Barnett, 1997).

There are a number of issues according to Lisman (1997) to think about as one decides on the criteria of the evaluation. What is to be evaluated and why are you evaluating? Would one want to know if service learning improved learning? Would one want to know if the student developed a greater sense of community?

Types of Program Evaluation

There are three types of program evaluation (McNamara, 1998). The first is a goals-based evaluation. Its purpose is to look at the program objectives and determine if those objectives are being met. The second is a process-based evaluation. Its purpose is to look at the processes that the program uses and determine the strengths and weaknesses of those processes. The third is an outcomes-based evaluation. The purpose of this evaluation is to determine if the program is producing the results that the stakeholders believe they need when they participated in the program.

McNamara (1998) indicates there are four levels of information that can be gathered from the evaluation. The first level pertains to what the participant felt about the service learning experience. Did the student like the experience? Was it worthwhile to participate? The second level provides information about what was learned. Was there a change in attitude? Was there an increase of knowledge? The third level gathers information about skills. Were new skills learned that improved behavior? The fourth level involves being effective. Did the person's behavior improve his or her performance? It is the opinion of Jacoby and Associates (1996) that it is important to determine whether the evaluation will be used to make internal improvements or used externally to prove program credibility.

Qualities of Evaluators

At the beginning of the evaluation process, the evaluator needs to establish a good working relationship with the program manager and other stakeholders. By involving these individuals when the recommendations are written, there is a higher probability that they are supported and implemented (Ramlow, 2000). Sonnichsen (1994) indicates there are five qualities that make for a successful evaluator. The first quality is "The primary attribute for evaluators who wish to influence policy in organizations is the belief that they can indeed cause change and affect organizational decisions" (p. 537). This individual believes that he or she can make an individual difference and contribution to change the institution where he or she works. The second quality is " . . . the ability to think critically" (p. 537). The individual is able to look at problems with new and different perspectives. The third quality is " . . . credibility" (p. 537) which Ramlow (2000) also supports. When evaluators are discussing changes with others in educational institutions, it is important that the evaluator is believable and whose reputation is trustworthy. The fourth quality is " . . . objectivity" (p. 537). Objectivity is important as the evaluator shares his or her data collection results, written reports, or suggested recommendations. The fifth quality is " . . . a complete understanding of the organization's administrative apparatus and knowledge of how decisions are made" (p. 538). The evaluator must present the recommendations in a timely manner and know how to get the attention of the person who has the power to implement recommendations. The evaluator should have an appropriate level of education (Shadish, 1998).

Standards to be Used During the Evaluation Process

The Program Evaluation Standards (1995) and Ramlow (2000) stresses that there are four characteristics used as a standard for evaluating a program. The four include utility, propriety,

feasibility, and accuracy. First, utility is defined as identifying the needs of the stakeholders so that they can be included in the evaluation. The limitations of the evaluation should be shared. Second, propriety specifies that it should be a legal and ethical evaluation and should have concern for the individuals involved with the evaluation. Third, feasibility specifies that the evaluation should be cost effective, the use of practical procedures, and awareness of the different groups involved with the evaluation. Lastly, accuracy provides information about the details that determine the worth of the program.

Marketing the Questionnaire

Cox (1996) suggests that the questionnaire should be marketed in order to receive good response. The questionnaire is sent with an introductory letter. The letter should include "a brief introduction, why the recipient's response is important, how long it will take to complete the form, when and how the respondent will be informed of the results, and a guarantee of confidentiality . . . " (p. 27). It is helpful to have at least one person who signs the letter be a person who the respondent recognizes. Included with the introductory letter and the questionnaire should be a self-address, stamped envelope for the convenience of the recipient. Should a participant not return the questionnaire a second effort is then made and another package is sent with a different letter than the introductory letter. A self-addressed, stamped envelope is included. The last effort is to follow up with a telephone call. It might encourage individuals to complete and return the questionnaire if some reward will be provided.

Kinds of Data Gathered

What information is needed in order to make sound decisions about the program being evaluated is important according to McNamara (1998) and Johnson et al. (1997). In evaluating a service learning program, information about students, faculty, and community partners should be

gathered. The data that was gathered on students concerned demographic information, reasons for participating, satisfaction with the experience, and impact on personal growth and academic performance. Data about faculty consisted of information about meeting their needs, meeting the needs of the students, providing additional training for faculty, motivations for using service learning, and how it affected their teaching. Data concerning community agencies consisted of the agencies' motivation, satisfaction level, meeting needs of the community, benefit to the agencies' clients, and value of the program.

Evaluating the Data

Once the data is available according to McNamara (1998), it is important to look at the goals for the evaluation. If one of the goals was to look at the strengths and weaknesses of the program, arrange the data into categories about strengths, weaknesses, and improvements. When data is quantitative, provide an average or communicate how many people ranked an answer with a particular value. When data is qualitative, group comments into like categories. Determine if there are any patterns or relationships from the themes of the data. When interpreting the data, what recommendations or conclusions can be made? What did you expect of the evaluation as compared to the actual results?

Writing Quality Recommendations

In writing recommendations, Sonnichsen (1994) suggests five qualities. The first quality is timeliness. Recommendations need to be made when management needs them (Ramlow, 2000). The second quality is that the recommendations should be realistic. Recommendations need to consider the cost, the organization and political environment, and how the organization would react. If the recommendations are not realistically possible, management will ignore them. The third quality is to provide the recommendations to the person(s) in authority and the

individual(s) who will be implementing them. The fourth and fifth qualities are to keep the recommendations simple and specific. Each recommendation should suggest one idea. If several individuals will be implementing the recommendation, explain in detail what steps are to be taken and who is responsible for each step.

Reporting the Results

In order for results of the evaluation to bring about change in the institution, Sonnichsen (1994) believes the evaluator must be aware of the competition for resources, power, and influence. It is imperative that the evaluator be able to market the results of the evaluation as something that adds value to the organization. The evaluation report should be distributed at every opportunity presented. When the evaluator has an opportunity to present the results of the evaluation to colleagues at the educational institution, the results should be presented in terms that are specific to the institution. By doing this, evidence is shown that evaluation is a function that should be performed in the educational institution. According to Shadish (1998) and Ramlow (2000), it is the evaluator's responsibility to communicate how the results of the evaluation were interpreted.

It is suggested by Sonnichsen (1994) that a plan be used. A memo, which includes recommendations for changes to an existing program, can be submitted to the individual or individuals that have the authority to make changes to the program. This provides an opportunity for potential changes to be openly discussed for approval or disapproval. Regardless of whether a plan is developed or memo written, Shadish (1998) cautions that if some of the results reflect negatively for stakeholders, communication of this information should be done with dignity.

McNamara (1998) recommends that consideration be given to who is the audience. An action plan should be developed. This plan is more detailed than Sonnichsen's. The plan should

communicate who is responsible for the tasks of the plan and when the tasks should be completed. Stakeholders should have an opportunity to review the results and openly discuss them. Keep a written record of the evaluation plan and the action plan for future reference in the event that other programs are evaluated.

Increase the Uses of the Evaluation Results

Focus must be equally placed on the process of evaluation and the process of writing realistic recommendations (Carter, 1994). By allowing stakeholders to review the initial recommendations, the stakeholders' perspective can be included in the final version of the recommendations. Relevant data should be included in the report for others to use. It may have a different meaning to others than what has been reported. Although recommendations may not be agreed to, the information in the report may produce other kinds of changes.

Carter (1994) believes that once the evaluation study has been completed, remind the decision makers about the project. Write articles in newsletters about the evaluation process, the results, or feedback by stakeholders. Create a presentation for the director of the program so that the findings can be incorporated into presentations that the director would be giving to others. Remind others in committee meetings about the evaluation results. Publish the evaluation results in professional magazines whose specialty is in the field of evaluation. Present the results to the public using a variety of media such as TV, radio, news shows, and talk shows. Evaluation staff can assist the program staff with the implementation of recommendations.

How to Improve the Evaluation Process

In order to improve the evaluation process for service learning, Hendricks (1994) makes a number of suggestions. The methods used today need to answer questions about how service learning works. The evaluator and the stakeholders need to work in collaboration during the

planning and designing of the evaluation. The end results would be an improvement in the quality of the results. Once the results of the evaluation are determined, these need to be communicated between the evaluator and the stakeholders. The evaluation and the results need to be reported in clear, concise, and understandable language from the reader's point of view. By making improvements in the evaluation process, the end result can be better learning on the part of the student, credibility of service learning, and improvements to the program.

Quality Control

Draft evaluation reports benefit from review by other evaluators who are knowledgeable about the kind of program being evaluated (Hatry, Newcomer, and Wholey, 1994). This may avoid errors when the evaluator does not have full knowledge about the program being evaluated. Give agency staff that has been through the evaluation process the opportunity to provide input to draft evaluation results. Problems with the evaluation can be identified by their input.

Ethical Behavior During the Evaluation Project

McNamara (1998) and Hatry, Newcomer, and Wholey (1994); Shadish (1998), and Ramlow (2000) stress that participants need to be educated about their role. They need to know who will be supplying information during the evaluation project, informed about what will happen to the information they supply and how the information will be kept confidential. Individuals need to understand what their role will be during the evaluation and that they have the right to participate or not participate in the evaluation. A consent form should be supplied to each participant that will explain his or her responsibilities throughout the evaluation process. Participants need to be treated with dignity and respect.

Summary

Evaluation is for educators to prove that the objectives of a program are being met and improve the program. Evaluation is one way to obtain feedback from those who participate in a program. It can provide positive feedback to participants concerning what is perceived as strengths of the program. Evaluation also provides an opportunity to discover what areas of the program need to be improved.

Government representatives use program evaluation as part of the auditing process of program review and program outcomes. There can be an increased use of client feedback because of government interests and performance accountability. Financial rewards are increasingly linked to program performance that in turn increases use of program evaluation. The administration of schools is being asked to provide more documentation on program performance measurements.

If the evaluation is conducted properly, good information can be gathered and interpreted. By allowing stakeholders to make recommendations about the data gathered, there is a higher likelihood that the recommendations would be implemented and the program improved. Stakeholders are able to see how their contribution to the program helped the program. This may be a way of strengthening relationships. This can be a time of envisioning what the program can become.

Chapter 3

METHODOLOGY AND PROCEDURES

Five procedures were used to complete this evaluation report and answer the research questions. First, a review of the literature was conducted. The review included theoretical topics of evaluation, assessment, evaluation standards, and improving evaluation. The Director of the Service Learning program at MWCC provided documentation from the Campus Compact National Center for Community Colleges (CCNCCC) about programs that have evaluated service learning projects and programs.

Second, an evaluation questionnaire previously developed was administered. The purpose of the questionnaire was to determine the extent to which the program objectives were being met by the students, faculty, and community partners of the Service Learning Program at MWCC. The process used to develop the instrument produced a mixed-format questionnaire. Formative and summative committees, which comprised of an administrator, faculty member, student, and community partners provided feedback and suggestions throughout the study. All formative and summative committee members had been involved in a service learning experience. The product developed was a three-part questionnaire. One part asked for data from students, the second part asked for data from faculty, and the third part asked for data from community partners. A pilot questionnaire was distributed to 10% of the students, faculty members, and community partners. Feedback from the participants in the pilot was used to improve the quality of the product. The program objectives used for this evaluation report were that:

1) Students developed:

   a) a sense of community,

b) a sense of service ethics,

c) civic responsibility,

d) interpersonal skills,

e) the ability to relate to diverse populations,

f) professional behaviors,

g) the ability to fulfill responsibilities,

h) the ability to meet general education competencies,

i) the ability to meet course competencies,

j) the ability to communicate with team members,

k) increased student self direction,

l) problem solving skills,

m) cooperative skills,

n) collaborative skills,

o) identify changes in attitude at work,

p) identify changes in attitude at school,

q) identify changes in the community,

r) increased self esteem,

s) career possibilities, and

t) evaluate their service learning experience.

2) Faculty recognized the value of:

a) guiding the student through the service learning experience, and

b) requiring reports on the student's experience.

3) Community partner recognized that the service learning program provided:

a) assistance in meeting the agency objectives,

b) a benefit to the agency,

c) valuable experience for clients,

d) a way to meet agency needs, and

e) the ability for new partnerships.

Participants who were to evaluate the service learning program were selected based on a listing supplied by the Director of the Service Learning Program at MWCC. The listing included all faculty, students, and community partners who had agreed to participate in the service learning program during the fall 1999 semester. Selection of participants for completion of the questionnaire was made by random selection. The questionnaire was administered during August 2000 to a total of 20 students, 16 faculty, and 20 community partners. For those participants who did not return the questionnaire, a follow-up letter, a second copy of the questionnaire and a stamped, self-addressed envelope was included for convenience in returning the completed questionnaire. Calling the individuals who had not returned the questionnaire would be the final attempt. When the person was contacted, he or she would be encouraged to complete the questionnaire. If there was a willingness to do so, another letter, questionnaire, and stamped self-addressed envelope would be sent to the participant.

Third, the results obtained from the questionnaire were collected, analyzed, and shared with the formative committee. Feedback from the formative committee was collected to help document the review and modify process and aid in reporting results. The formative committee consisted of one faculty member who has participated in the service learning experience, one student who had participated in the service learning experience, and one community agency

member. A complete listing of the participants on the formative committee and why and how they were chosen was included in the appendix of the practicum report (see Appendix A).

Fourth, conclusions were drawn by comparing the objectives with the results obtained from the survey. Recommendations were made regarding the service learning program at MWCC.

Fifth, a draft of the findings was presented to the summative committee for validation against the previously established criteria. The summative committee consisted of the director of the service learning program and two community partners. A complete listing of the participants on the summative committee and why and how they were chosen was included in the appendix of the practicum report (see Appendix B).

Assumptions

For this practicum, it was assumed that the formative committee members were able to provide guidance throughout this project. It was also assumed that the summative committee members were able to validate the results of this project. Furthermore, it is assumed that the sample of individuals who participated in the study was representative of the population who participated in service learning program experience.

Limitations

One of the limitations of the study was that the results of the study could not be generalized because the data and information obtained from the study pertained to a specific program at MWCC. Another limitation is that a practicum can use a variety of methodologies. This practicum applied only to the methodology of evaluation. A third limitation is to omit the drawing since this might have encouraged the wrong response on the part of the participants.

Chapter 4

RESULTS

Five procedures were used to implement the evaluation methodology, to address the research questions, and accomplish the purpose of this practicum. First, a review of the literature was conducted. Initially it included theoretical topics about evaluation. The theoretical topics of evaluation included the importance of evaluation, types of program evaluation, qualities of evaluators, kinds of data gathered, evaluating the data, writing quality recommendations, how to report the results, increasing the uses of the evaluation results, quality control measures, and ethical behavior employed during the evaluation. It also reviewed standards to be used during the evaluation process and how to improve the evaluation process. The review was expanded to look at marketing the questionnaire to obtain a good rate of return.

The topic of assessment was pursued. It was found that articles dealing with assessment discussed the service learning experience instead of the assessment of a service learning program. Therefore this topic was not included in the literature review. The Director of the Service Learning program at MWCC supplied additional information from one source about evaluation of service learning programs. The information that was provided came from CCNCCC. One of CCNCCC's purposes is to provide resources that helped service learning programs improve.

Second, an evaluation questionnaire was developed through a project at MWCC during the timeframe of October 1999 through May 2000. The questionnaire was developed to determine if the Service Learning program objectives were being met. The Director of the Service Learning program at MWCC supplied a list of faculty, students, and community partners who had participated in the service learning experience during the fall 1999 semester. Selection of 20 students and 20 community partners was made by random selection from the list. There

were 16 faculties who had participated in the service learning experience during the fall 1999 semester. In order to have a sample size as close to the sample size of students and community partners, all faculties were selected. The return rate for the questionnaire consisted of 8 from students or 40%, 13 from faculty or 81.25%, and 13 from community partners or 65%. The level of effort to insure as high a rate of return as possible consisted of three attempts. The first attempt included an introductory letter (see Appendix C), a questionnaire (see Appendix D), a study participant consent form (see Appendix E), and a self-addressed envelope, which was sent to each participant. The return rate for students was 4 questionnaires or 20%. The return rate for faculty was 13 questionnaires or 81.25%. Two faculty members contacted the researcher and explained that during the fall 1999 semester no students in their classes had participated in the service learning experience and therefore the questionnaire was not going to be completed. The return rate for community partners was 6 questionnaires or 30%.

A follow-up letter (see Appendix F), a second copy of the questionnaire, and a stamped, self-addressed envelope was sent to the remaining students and community partners. It was determined that one faculty member no longer worked at the college and would not be able to complete the questionnaire. Students returned 1 questionnaire or 5%. Community partners returned 6 questionnaires or 30%.

A last attempt was made to contact those participants who had not returned the questionnaire. All were contacted by telephone. Of the remaining 15 students, eight were left messages on their homes, one had an incorrect telephone number and no other way to contact the student, one student had moved away, and one student was called but there was no way to leave a message. Four indicated that if the questionnaire were sent again, they would fill it out. For those four students, a second follow-up letter (see Appendix G) was enclosed along with a copy

of the questionnaire and a stamped, self-addressed envelope. Students returned an additional three questionnaires or 15%.

Of the remaining community partners, one did not have any students who had participated in the service learning experience during the fall 1999 semester. One community partner had no telephone number to contact him or her. One representative of the community partner no longer was employed at the site. One community partners were contacted but there was no way to leave a message that the completion of the questionnaire was still important and their input would have been of value. Three community partners indicated if another copy of the questionnaire was sent, they would fill it out and return it. One questionnaire or 5% was received from the community partner.

Third, the results obtained from the questionnaire were collected, analyzed, and shared with the formative committee. Table 1 summarizes the students' opinion about the Service Learning Program at MWCC. For purposes of reporting, the categories of "strongly agree" and "agree" have been combined and are represented in Table 1, 2, and 3 by using the category "agree". Similarly, the categories of "strongly disagree" and "disagree" have been combined and are represented in Table 1, 2, and 3 by the category "disagree". Criteria that were similar in nature were combined for reporting purposes.

Table 1

Student's Opinion of the Service Learning Program at MWCC

	Student's Perspective		
Student Criteria	Agree	No Opinion	Disagree
A sense of community	8		
Diverse populations	8		
Ability to fulfill responsibilities	15	1	
General educational competencies	6	2	
Course competencies and objectives	8		
Relate to course work	8		
Increased self direction	8		
Problem solving skills	5	2	1
Cooperative skills	8		
Collaborative skills	8		
Changes in attitude in school	4	3	1
Changes in attitude in work	2	5	1
Changes in attitude in community	6		1
Self esteem	6	2	
Career possibilities	6	2	
Evaluate service learning experience	8		

Students were asked open-ended questions. In response to the question that asked about the benefits and challenges of the experience, students reflected the importance of good

communication skills. Students realized the need to budget time so that all their commitments were fulfilled. When students were asked to provide an example that they had an increased awareness of diverse populations, reflection indicated how the needs of the clients were affected based on their cultural or socioeconomic status.

Table 2 summarizes the faculty opinion about the Service Learning Program at MWCC.

Table 2

Faculty's Opinion of the Service Learning Program at MWCC

	Faculty's Perspective		
Faculty Criteria	Agree	No Opinion	Disagree
General education competencies	14		
Course competencies and objectives	27	1	
Guide students through the experience	14		
Share results with colleagues	37	4	1

Faculty commented on the open-ended questions about the benefits of the service learning experience. Students had the opportunity for real learning about life and work. There was practical application of the course curriculum. The challenges included faculty finding the time to complete the work associated with the service learning experience, finding students who desired to participate, coordinating the placement of the student at the community partner's work site, and students' ability to complete the service learning experience without the faculty member's intervention.

In creating a service learning experience in the classroom, many faculty introduced the concept through the syllabus, which was handed out the first day of class. Objectives of the course and the service learning experience were interrelated. Faculty asked students if they would like to participate in the service learning experience as compared to making it a mandatory assignment. Ideas for service learning opportunity were created through brainstorming sessions with students and faculty.

Opportunities were identified for community service placement sites through personal contacts, internships, calls received from community service placement site representatives, the Director of the Service Learning program at MWCC, researched possible sites, and through students who actively sought a particular type of experience which would enhance their own objectives. Standards for selecting a particular site involved agreement on the agency goals, course objectives, and student objectives. Communication with a representative from the site via the telephone or in person was important.

Table 3 summarizes the community partner opinion about the Service Learning Program at MWCC.

Table 3

Community Partner's Opinion of the Service Learning Program at MWCC

	Community Partner's Perspective		
Community Partner's Criteria	Agree	No Opinion	Disagree
Assist in meeting the agency goals	12	1	

(table continues)

	Community Partner's Perspective		
Community Partner's Criteria	Agree	No Opinion	Disagree
Benefit to the agency	12		1
Valuable experience for clients	10	2	1
A way to meet agency needs	12		1
Ability for new partnerships	12	1	
Civic responsibility	11	2	

Community partners were asked to comment on several open-ended questions. Community partners reflected that improved communication between those involved with the service learning project so that the goals of the project are better understood and longer internships, developing appropriate projects, having time to supervise projects, and the restricted time frame of students. Community partners also commented that students had the opportunity to learn about different populations that might be their clients when they graduate from MWCC. Student participation provided services to the community partner.

Formative committee members received an introductory memo which explained their role in the evaluation process (see Appendix H), a summary of the evaluation (see Appendix I), which explained the results of the evaluation questionnaire used to evaluate the service learning program, and an evaluation form (see Appendix J). Highlights of the evaluation concluded that stakeholders believe the program had much strength and few weaknesses. All stakeholders believed the program had validity and was of benefit. Communication between the stakeholders should be monitored. Students should be advised of the time management skills required for this

project. Committee members agreed with the findings of the evaluation by indicating on the evaluation form, which was returned.

All community members could not agree that they benefited from the experience, that it met their needs, and whether it benefited their clients. One committee member raised the question whether the community partners had made any suggestions on the questionnaires they had returned. In reviewing the questionnaire results, there were no suggestions made. By committee members providing feedback, the review and modify process was used and aided in reporting results.

Fourth, conclusions were drawn by comparing the objectives with the results obtained from the survey. Students, faculty members, and community partners agreed that the objectives of the program were met. Faculty and community partners saw that students had the opportunity to work in situations where real learning about life and work took place. Time management skills for students were necessary to be successful in completing the experience as well as keeping up with their other responsibilities. Community partners recognized the limited time students had to participate in this experience. Communication between the participants of the program needed to be clear so that goals were clearly understood by all parties.

Recommendations regarding the Service Learning program at MWCC were suggested and accepted by the formative and summative committee members. These included the importance of monitoring the communication process between all parties since the student and community partner had each made comments about its importance. Since community partners expressed the concern about appropriate projects for the student, it might be beneficial for the stakeholders to meet for a brainstorming session to create a list of ideas for appropriate projects.

Students should also be interviewed to insure that they have appropriate time management skills to fulfill their responsibility to the service learning experience and their other responsibilities.

Fifth, a draft of the findings (see Appendix K) was presented to the summative committee to validate the findings, which used the previously established criteria and to validate the evaluation process. Members were asked to complete a consent form (see Appendix L) and to indicate on the validation form (see Appendix M) if they agreed with the findings and the process used for evaluation. Committee members agreed with the findings and validated that the process used was a valid evaluation process. One member asked that the report be forwarded to the President of MWCC, the academic dean, and the assistant academic dean. Another reflection indicated the belief that the groups' perception of the program was positive and that the areas for development were accurate.

Chapter 5

DISCUSSION, CONCLUSIONS, IMPLICATIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Discussion

The results of this practicum directly related to the purpose of the study, which was the evaluation of the Service Learning program at MWCC. The results of the evaluation indicated strengths and concerns about the program which supports McNamara (1998) and Sonnichsen (1994) purpose for evaluation. Jacoby and Associates (1996) also reflected that this was one reason to evaluate. The evaluation, based on the stakeholders' opinion, supported the position of McNamara (1998) to determine that the needs of the stakeholders were being met.

The program evaluation for MWCC looked at whether the program objectives were being met which supports one of the reasons McNamara (1998) gave for evaluation. It did not support evaluation based on the processes that the program had used. Although the evaluation's purpose was not to produce the results that the stakeholders believed they needed as they participated in the program, the results reflected very positively that the stakeholders were for the most part satisfied with participation in the program.

The evaluation supported the four levels of information that McNamara (1998) indicated could be gathered from the evaluation. How the participant's felt about the experience was obtained through the open-ended questions. The student portion of the questionnaire dealt with the kind of information learned, which is the second level of information. The third level of information, which was about new skills learned, is found in the student's portion of the questionnaire more so than in the faculty or community partner's portion of the questionnaire. Portions of the questionnaire for students and community partners reflected learning new skills, which improved the behavior of the person. The purpose of the evaluation did not specify

whether it would be used for internal or external improvements to the program as Jacoby and Associates (1996) indicated.

The questionnaire was marketed to obtain an adequate rate of return. Although Cox (1996) suggested that the letter, which accompanied the questionnaire, have a signature of someone known to the recipient, this was not done. The level of effort to obtain a good rate of return was consistent with Cox's (1996) opinion. Information obtained from the evaluation of the service learning program did not include demographic information and reasons for participating on the part of the student; additional training for faculty, meeting the faculty's needs, and motivation for participating in service learning as McNamara (1998) and Johnson et al. (1997) suggested.

McNamara's (1998) suggestion of taking an average when data is quantitative was disregarded because by averaging the data, it might have given an incorrect interpretation. As an example, if two individuals agreed and two individuals disagreed, the result of averaging this data would give an answer of "No Opinion" when, in fact, there were two definite opinions. Sonnichsen's (1994) approach to writing quality recommendations was supported through the report. Recommendations were provided in writing to the Director of the Service Learning program at MWCC, who has the authority to make changes to the program, during the month of November 2000. The recommendations were realistic and possible to complete. Each recommendation indicated one suggestion.

Results of the evaluation may be shared through the Service Learning program's newsletter or at the Faculty of the Whole meeting at MWCC, which takes place on a monthly basis. The Director of the Service Learning program at MWCC has asked for the results of the evaluation so that they may be included in a grant which if awarded will help fund the program

for the next three years. The Director has also requested that a copy of the report be forwarded to the President of the college, the academic dean, and associate academic dean. These forms of communication support the opinion of Sonnichsen (1994).

Conclusions

The literature review provided helpful information about the process and details of performing an evaluation. In order to determine whether the Service Learning program at MWCC had met its intended objectives, a questionnaire had been developed specifically for the purpose of evaluating the service learning program at MWCC. Students, faculty, and community partners, who were actively involved in the program, were asked to reflect on their experiences when the questionnaire was completed. Random selection allowed an equal opportunity for students and community partners to participate in the program. By obtaining data from a variety of stakeholders, it was possible to verify that the program objectives were met. It also provided support that stakeholders, who have different reasons for participating in the program, indicated their satisfaction with the experience. Stakeholders were given an opportunity to answer open-ended questions, which allowed them more freedom to express their thoughts about their experiences. There were many objectives that had been measured and consistently the majority of stakeholders indicated their satisfaction.

In order for the evaluation to be effective, the strategy used provided participants of the program three opportunities to respond to the questionnaire. The use of the formative and summative committees to validate the results and process used insured that the evaluation was carried out correctly. Committee members' opinions were collected through an evaluation form, which allowed for the process to be evaluated and validated. The Director of the Service Learning program at MWCC fully supported the evaluation of the program.

Implications

The results of the evaluation will provide valuable information for all the participants in the program. Since this was the first evaluation, all participants were able to comment on the strengths and areas of improvement for the program. The students, faculty, and community partners can learn what their population believes about the program as well as what the other two populations believe about the program.

Stakeholders are asking for programs to validate their value and worth. By conducting an evaluation by the participants in the program, the results can reinforce the value and worth of this program. Results can be shared with accrediting agencies. In the year 2002, MWCC will be going through a 10-year accreditation. This information will be of use for this accreditation.

The spring 2000 semester may include an increase in the workload for faculty. They may be teaching five courses instead of four. There will be less time for voluntary activities or activities that add to the workload. Faculty's lack of available time may pose a threat to the service learning program. By sharing the results in the faculty of the whole meeting, this may encourage other faculty members to participate in this program.

The administration of the college provides financial support to the program. They will have the opportunity of knowing that their investment has been a wise one. It will be possible to use the results of the evaluation for good public relations and may build more community support for this program.

If the results were published, other educators would benefit from the findings. Other representatives from service learning programs would acquire knowledge about evaluation. This would give visibility to the work that the college is doing and may provide an opportunity for networking. The results of the evaluation provide the Director of the Service Learning

program at MWCC with some suggestions that could be used to help strengthen the program and provide some direction for the program. The suggestions could be included in the goals for the program to insure that they are addressed.

Recommendations

It was recommended that when the program reevaluates, thought should be given to creating a questionnaire that asks the same questions of all stakeholders. There was no way to compare and contrast all three groups on the same topics based on the questionnaire, which was used for this evaluation. It would be of benefit to reevaluate again within the next three years, as reevaluation should be done on an ongoing basis. Clear communication between all parties should be stressed. It might be suggested that the faculty, student, and community partner arrange to meet or telephone a number of times throughout the project. This might help insure that communication stays clear.

Faculty participation may decline because of an increase in workload. The current teaching load is four courses and is expected to increase to five courses beginning with the January 2001 semester. There will be an increase of work on the instructor's available time. Faculty has indicated that other voluntary activities they currently participate in may be reduced due to time constraints. Discussions should take place with the administration to determine whether a course release might be granted. This would provide a way for faculty to participate in service learning and show administration's support of the program.

Appropriate projects need to be defined between community partners, faculty, and students. Brainstorming sessions with all stakeholders present could create the opportunity for new ideas that could turn into projects. Faculty and students who have participated in this project before could be invited to the brainstorming session to share some of their ideas and

thoughts. As part of the interview process with the Director of the Service Learning program and the faculty member, students should be made aware of the importance of time management skills so that they can fulfill their responsibility to the service learning experience without neglecting their other responsibilities.

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APPENDIXES

Appendix A

Formative Committee Members

Service Learning Team Member

Qualifications: Master's degree in counseling psychology and over six years of experience as an instructor.

Reason for formative committee selection: participated in service learning for two years with an emphasis in abnormal counseling methods and interviewing techniques.

Methods used for formative committee selection: discussion of the project intent, worked on the development of the questionnaire, which would be used to evaluate the service learning program.

Student Member

Qualifications: prior member of the student population.

Reasons for formative committee selection: participant in the service learning experience,

Methods used for formative committee selection: discussion of the project intent, worked on the development of the questionnaire, which would be used to evaluate the service learning program.

Assistant Academic Dean

Qualifications: Bachelor of Science in Business and Education, Masters of Education in Business and Education, and faculty member.

Reason for formative committee selection: interested in the topic and provides support to faculty members and students.

Methods used for formative committee selection: discussion of the project intent, worked on the development of the questionnaire, which would be used to evaluate the service learning program.

Appendix B

Summative Committee Members

Community Agency Representative

Qualifications: PhD in Chemistry, twenty-three years experience in education, three years as executive director of a community agency.

Reason for summative committee selection: many service learning students participating at the community partner's establishment, participant for more than three years, and interested in the process of questionnaire design and evaluation

Methods used for summative committee selection: discussion of the project intent, worked on the development of the questionnaire, which would be used to evaluate the service learning program.

Director of Service Learning Program

Qualifications: Masters in Instructional Design, three years experience in service learning, 10 years in volunteer management.

Reason for summative committee selection: participated in service learning for three years and interested in improving service learning program and experience in questionnaire design

Methods used for summative committee selection: discussion of the project intent, worked on the development of the questionnaire, which would be used to evaluate the service learning program.

Community Partner Representative

Qualifications: M.A. in education, twenty-four years in education, interfaces directly with the students who work in a service learning capacity at this community partner's work site.

Reasons for formative committee selection: recommended by another summative committee member, participant in the service learning experience

Methods used for formative committee selection: discussion of the project intent, worked on the development of the questionnaire, which would be used to evaluate the service learning program.

Appendix C

Introductory Letter

July 21, 2000

Dear Participant:

The Service Learning program at Mount Wachusett Community College has been in existence for three years and is now going to be evaluated with your help. A questionnaire was developed during the college 1999-2000 year with the purpose of determining program strengths and the areas that need to be strengthened.

We have taken the participants who have participated in the Service Learning experience during the fall 1999 semester and have randomly selected 20 students, 20 faculty members, and 20 community partners to complete the questionnaire. We look to you for input because ***you*** are the ***best*** individual to provide input based on ***your*** experience. Please be assured that your confidentiality will be maintained at all times. Our goal is to obtain honest input from each participant.

We have enclosed two documents:

- Document 1 is a consent form. It provides details about the evaluation and your rights associated with this project. Please read the consent form and sign it. If you have questions, please contact the investigator, Carol Reed, who is an instructor at Mount Wachusett Community College at (603) 431-3757.

- Document 2 is the questionnaire. It should take no more than 30 minutes to complete. If you have questions about the questionnaire, please contact Carol Reed at the above number.

Please return the consent form and the questionnaire in the stamped self-addressed envelope that is enclosed with this letter no later than August 4, 2000. When you return the questionnaire, you will be entered in a drawing for a $25.00 cash award.

Page 2
July 21, 2000

Should you have any questions, please contact Carol at (603) 431-3757. Thank you for helping the Service Learning program at Mount Wachusett Community College continue to be the best program it can be.

Sincerely,

Director of Cooperative Education
and Service Learning Program

Instructor

/mtf

Enclosures: Consent Form
Questionnaire

Appendix D

Questionnaire

Mount Wachusett
Community College

444 Green Street, Gardner, MA 01440-1000
(978) 632-6600

Student Opinion – Service Learning

INSTRUCTIONS: Please circle the answer which best describes your opinion regarding the statements below. When you have finished circling the answers on this page, continue onto the next page.

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	No Opinion	Agree	Strongly Agree
As a participant in the Service Learning experience, I accomplished my responsibilities to the community partner.	1	2	3	4	5
My responsibilities to the teacher were completed as a part of my Service Learning experience.	1	2	3	4	5
The goals that I established for myself were accomplished by the time my Service Learning experience was completed.	1	2	3	4	5
My Service Learning opportunity provided meaningful experiences for my objectives.	1	2	3	4	5
My Service Learning experience related to my course work.	1	2	3	4	5
My Service Learning experience related to my college general education competencies.	1	2	3	4	5
I became aware of diverse populations as a participant in the Service Learning experience.	1	2	3	4	5
Service Learning helped me develop a sense of community. A sense of community is defined as: *knowing one's place in the community and knowing what the community can give to the person.*	1	2	3	4	5

Developed by the participants in the MWCC Service Learning Questionnaire Team *Version 4/9/00*

Mount Wachusett
Community College

444 Green Street, Gardner, MA 01440-1000
(978) 632-6600

Student Opinion – Service Learning

INSTRUCTIONS: Please circle the answer which best describes your opinion regarding the statements below.

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	No Opinion	Agree	Strongly Agree
My Service Learning experience has helped me develop problem-solving skills.	1	2	3	4	5
I developed cooperation skills by participating in Service Learning.	1	2	3	4	5
Service Learning encouraged me to develop collaborative skills.	1	2	3	4	5
My Service Learning experience helped me identify changes in my attitude about school.	1	2	3	4	5
My attitude about work changed because of my Service Learning experience.	1	2	3	4	5
My Service Learning experience helped me identify changes in my attitude about the community.	1	2	3	4	5
My self esteem was changed as a result of my Service Learning experience.	1	2	3	4	5
As a participant in a Service Learning experience, I had opportunities to assess career possibilities.	1	2	3	4	5
I was given the opportunity to evaluate my Service Learning experience.	1	2	3	4	5

Developed by the participants in the MWCC Service Learning Questionnaire Team *Version 4/9/00*

Mount Wachusett
Community College

444 Green Street, Gardner, MA 01440-1000
(978) 632-6600

Student Opinion – Service Learning

INSTRUCTIONS: Please circle the answer which best describes your opinion regarding the statements below.

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	No Opinion	Agree	Strongly Agree
My Service Learning experience has helped me develop problem-solving skills.	1	2	3	4	5
I developed cooperation skills by participating in Service Learning.	1	2	3	4	5
Service Learning encouraged me to develop collaborative skills.	1	2	3	4	5
My Service Learning experience helped me identify changes in my attitude about school.	1	2	3	4	5
My attitude about work changed because of my Service Learning experience.	1	2	3	4	5
My Service Learning experience helped me identify changes in my attitude about the community.	1	2	3	4	5
My self esteem was changed as a result of my Service Learning experience.	1	2	3	4	5
As a participant in a Service Learning experience, I had opportunities to assess career possibilities.	1	2	3	4	5
I was given the opportunity to evaluate my Service Learning experience.	1	2	3	4	5

Developed by the participants in the MWCC Service Learning Questionnaire Team *Version 4/9/00*

Mount Wachusett
Community College

444 Green Street, Gardner, MA 01440-1000
(978) 632-6600

Student Opinion – Service Learning

INSTRUCTIONS: **Please read and answer the questions below.**

What, in your opinion, were the benefits and challenges to participating in a service-learning experience?

Relate an example that showed you have increased awareness of diverse populations because of your Service Learning experience.

Thank you for taking **your** time. Please return the completed questionnaire to: Carol B. Reed, Instructor, Mount Wachusett Community College, 444 Green Street, Gardner, MA 01440. A stamped, self-addressed envelope is enclosed for your convenience.

Developed by the participants in the MWCC Service Learning Questionnaire Team *Version 4/9/00*

Mount Wachusett
Community College

444 Green Street, Gardner, MA 01440-1000
(978) 632-6600

Community Partner Opinion – Service Learning

INSTRUCTIONS: Please circle the answer which best describes your opinion regarding the statements below. When you have finished circling the answers on this page, continue onto the next page.

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	No Opinion	Agree	Strongly Agree
Service learning assisted Mount Wachusett Community College (MWCC) students in the development of service ethics.	1	2	3	4	5
MWCC students developed a sense of community through the service learning experience. A sense of community is defined as knowing one's place in the community and knowing what the community can give to the person.	1	2	3	4	5
Service learning helped MWCC students develop a sense of civic responsibility. Civic responsibility is defined as actively involved in the community.	1	2	3	4	5
Interpersonal skills were developed by the MWCC student through participation in the service learning experience.	1	2	3	4	5
MWCC students demonstrated their ability to relate to diverse populations.	1	2	3	4	5
MWCC students demonstrated professional behavior during their service learning experience.	1	2	3	4	5
MWCC students accomplished their responsibilities for their service learning experience.	1	2	3	4	5

Developed by the participants in the MWCC Service Learning Questionnaire Team *Version 4/9/0806*

Mount Wachusett
Community College

444 Green Street, Gardner, MA 01440-1000
(978) 632-6600

Community Partner Opinion – Service Learning

INSTRUCTIONS: Please circle the answer which best describes your opinion regarding the statements below.

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	No Opinion	Agree	Strongly Agree
Service Learning opportunities provided meaningful experiences for the meeting of community agency objectives.	1	2	3	4	5
The goals of the Service Learning experience benefited our agency.	1	2	3	4	5
Service Learning experiences were valuable for your clients.	1	2	3	4	5
The MWCC Service-Learning program meets the needs of the community partner.	1	2	3	4	5
New community partnerships may be important in the future.	1	2	3	4	5

INSTRUCTIONS: Please read and answer the questions below then proceed to the next page.

In your opinion, how can existing partnerships between community partners and the service-learning program be improved?

_____

_____

_____

Developed by the participants in the MWCC Service Learning Questionnaire Team *Version 4/9/00*

Mount Wachusett
Community College

444 Green Street, Gardner, MA 01440-1000
(978) 632-6600

Community Partner Opinion – Service Learning

INSTRUCTIONS: **Please read and answer the questions below.**

What, in your opinion, are the benefits and challenges to participating in a service-learning experience?

_____

_____

_____

How will Service Learning address the needs of the community partner in the future?

_____

_____

_____

Thank you for taking **your** time. Please return the completed questionnaire to: Carol B. Reed, Instructor, Mount Wachusett Community College, 444 Green Street, Gardner, MA 01440. A stamped, self-addressed envelope is enclosed for your convenience.

Developed by the participants in the MWCC Service Learning Questionnaire Team *Version 4/9/00*

Mount Wachusett
Community College

444 Green Street, Gardner, MA 01440-1000
(978) 632-6600

Faculty Opinion – Service Learning

INSTRUCTIONS: Please circle the answer which best describes your opinion regarding the statements below. The last question on this page asks for your insight into the service learning program. When you have finished this page, continue onto the next page.

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	No Opinion	Agree	Strongly Agree
It is important to guide students through the service learning experience.	1	2	3	4	5
The student meets general education competencies as part of the service-learning experience	1	2	3	4	5
It is important for the student to meet course competencies as part of the service-learning experience.	1	2	3	4	5
It is important that the student's experiences are reported back to the service learning team members.	1	2	3	4	5
It is important to describe the student's results to colleagues in service learning to illustrate the benefits of service learning as a method of instruction.	1	2	3	4	5
It is important that the student's results are reported back to the student's colleagues.	1	2	3	4	5
Service Learning provided meaningful experience for the faculty objectives.	1	2	3	4	5

Developed by the participants in the MWCC Service Learning Questionnaire Team *Version 4/9/0899*

Mount Wachusett
Community College

444 Green Street, Gardner, MA 01440-1000
(978) 632-6600

Faculty Opinion – Service Learning

INSTRUCTIONS: Please read and answer the questions below.

What, in your opinion, were the benefits and challenges to participating in a service-learning experience?

What were the steps used to create a Service Learning experience in your class?

In your opinion, how did you identify opportunities at community service placement sites for students to perform meaningful Service Learning?

How were the standards for selecting a community service placement site met?

Thank you for taking your time. Please return the completed questionnaire to: Carol B. Reed, Instructor, Mount Wachusett Community College, 444 Green Street, Gardner, MA 01440. A stamped, self-addressed envelope is enclosed for your convenience.

Developed by the participants in the MWCC Service Learning Questionnaire Team *Version 4/9/00*

Appendix E

Study Participant Consent Form

TO: Potential Study Subjects

FROM: Carol B. Reed

SUBJECT: Consent Form – Participation in Evaluation Methodology Practicum

DATE:

This memorandum explains the consent form for an evaluation methodology practicum being conducted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the Doctor of Education degree at NOVA Southeastern University.

Study Title: Evaluation of the Service Learning Program at Mount Wachusett Community College.

Investigator Information:

Carol B. Reed
41 Saratoga Way
Portsmouth, NH 03801
(Home) 603-431-3757
(E-Mail) creed 61388@aol.com

Nova Southeastern University Institutional Review Board: 954-262-5369

Description: The service learning program has been in existence since 1997. MWCC has received grant money to operate the program. One of the responsibilities of the director of the program is to explain the objectives for the 1999 – 2000 school year. One of the objectives is to evaluate the service learning program. The program has never been evaluated since its inception. Because of your participation in the program, you are being contacted to seek your consent to participate in this project. Your participation would involve completion of a questionnaire, which will require you to identify your perceptions of the effectiveness of the various components of the service learning program as it pertains to your participation in the program. It is anticipated that a time commitment of no more than one-half hour would be required to complete the questionnaire. Your participation in the study will in no way interfere with your regular work or school schedule.

Risks and Benefits: There are no anticipated risks or benefits associated with your participation in this study.

Costs and Payments: Participation in the study is voluntary. I understand that I will not receive any payment for my participation in this project.

Confidentiality: Your identify as a study participant will not be disclosed in any written presentation or discussion regarding this project.

Right to Withdraw: You may decide not to participate in this study or cease to participate at any time without any penalty.

Voluntary Consent: I have read this consent form (or it has been read to me), and I understand the contents. All of my questions concerning this research have been answered. If I have any further questions in the future about this study, they will be answered by the investigator. A copy of this form has been given to me.

_____ _____

Participant's Signature Date

_____ _____

Investigator's Signature Date

Appendix F

Follow-Up Letter

September 9, 2000

NAME
ADDRESS
CITY, STATE, ZIP CODE

Reference: Letter dated _____, 2000

Dear _____:

A short time ago a questionnaire was sent to you for your input. As of the above date, the questionnaire with your comments has not been received. As a participant in the Service Learning Program at Mount Wachusett Community College, your comments about your experience would be most helpful as we evaluate the program.

Won't you take just a few minutes to review the enclosed questionnaire and return it in the self-addressed stamped envelope? In this way your opinions can be heard and any improvements or recommendations you are suggesting can be considered for input as we look to strengthen the program.

Should you have any questions, please contact Carol Reed, Instructor at Mount Wachusett Community College at 978-632-6600 extension 226. We would appreciate it if you would return the questionnaire no later than _____.

Thank you for your attention in this matter.

Sincerely,

Susan McAlpine and Carol Reed
Director of Service Learning and Instructor

/cbr

Enclosure

Appendix G

Second Follow-Up Letter

September 28, 2000

Name
Street Address
City, State, Zip Code

Reference: Telephone conversation of September 27, 2000

Dear

In regard to the above reference, please find enclosed two documents:

Document 1 is a consent form. It provides details about the evaluation and your rights associated with this project. Please read the consent form and sign it. If you have questions, please contact the investigator, Carol Reed, who is an instructor at Mount Wachusett Community College at (978) 632-6600 extension 226.

Document 2 is the questionnaire. It should take you about 30 minutes to complete. If you have questions about the questionnaire, please contact Carol Reed at the above number.

Please return the consent form and the questionnaire in the stamped self-addressed envelope, which is enclosed with this letter no later than Friday, October 6, 2000.

Thank you for helping the Service Learning program at Mount Wachusett Community College continue to be the best program it can be.

Sincerely,

Carol B. Reed
Instructor

Enclosures: Consent Form
Questionnaire

Appendix H

Consent Form

MEMO

TO: Formative Committee Members

FROM: Carol B. Reed

SUBJECT: Invitation to Participate

DATE: October 17, 2000

You are being invited to participate in a project to evaluate the service learning program at Mount Wachusett Community College. You are being asked to participate because of your expertise in this area. The time frame for this project is approximately October 17, 2000 through October 31, 2000. It is expected that you will need to review the summary of the evaluation. It should take about one hour in length. All review can be done through the mail.

Participation in this study is voluntary. You may withdraw from this project whenever you desire. There is no compensation for participating. There is also no risk for you to participate. All information obtained through the review process is strictly confidential. To further protect your identify, any publications from this study will be written without identifying information. It is understood that the protection of your identity is regarded as an issue of the utmost importance by the researcher and that your anonymity is safeguarded.

_____ _____

Participant's Signature Date

_____ _____

Investigator's Signature Date

Appendix I

Summary of Evaluation

TO: Formative Committee Member

FROM: Carol B. Reed, Researcher

SUBJECT: Evaluation of the Service Learning program at MWCC

DATE: October 17, 2000

When the questionnaire to evaluate the Service Learning program was completed, you were asked of your willingness to participate in the evaluation of the program. At that time, you indicated you would do so. Would you read the enclosed consent form and if you agree with its contents, sign it. Then read the summary of evaluation. After you have read the summary, use the evaluation form for comments. If you agree with the findings, would you check the box next to the statement "I agree with the findings". If you disagree with the findings, would you check the box next to the statement "I disagree with the findings" and provide any remarks you would care to make on the line entitled "Comments". Also, if there is anything else you would like to reflect on, please put those statements on the same line entitled "Comments".

Return the consent form and the evaluation form in the stamped, self-addressed envelope, which has been enclosed for your convenience. If you have any questions, please contact me at (978)-632-6600 extension 226. This review should be returned to me no later than October 24, 2000. If your comments are not received by that date, it will be assumed that you agree with the findings in the summary of evaluation.

SUMMARY OF EVALUATION

The evaluation of the Service Learning program at MWCC was to determine how well the program objectives were being met. For purposes of this evaluation, the word objective is defined as a standard or criteria upon which a decision can be made. We defined the criteria based on the literature review, other models, and formative and summative committee review and modify cycles. Based on those criteria, a questionnaire was designed.

The Service Learning program at MWCC has been evaluated. The process used to evaluate the program consisted of distributing the questionnaire to 20 students and 20 community partners, who were randomly selected. The entire faculty who had participated in the service learning program consisted of 16 members. In order to have groups, which were similar in size, all 16 faculty were selected.

An introductory letter, consent form, questionnaire, and stamped self-addressed envelope were sent to all selected participants. For those participants who did not return the questionnaire, a follow-up letter, a second copy of the questionnaire, and a stamped, self-addressed envelope was sent. A third and final attempt was made to contact the remaining individuals who had not returned the questionnaire. In total, 40% of students, 88% of faculty, and 60% of community partners returned the questionnaire.

According to students, the strengths of the program included: a developed sense of community; ability to fulfill responsibilities, that the experience related to general education competencies, course competencies, and objectives; there was an increased sense of self-direction and self esteem, a development of cooperative and collaborative skills; opportunity to examine career possibilities, and a change in attitude about the community they live in. There was some minor disagreement on whether the student had developed problem solving skills and a change in attitude about school and work. Students indicated the importance of good communication skills and being able to budget time to fulfill their responsibilities to all their commitments. They indicated an increased awareness of diverse populations because they saw how the needs of the clients were affected based on their cultural and socioeconomic status.

Faculty saw that the strengths of the program included: that the student met the general education competencies, course competencies, and objectives and believed it was important to guide the student through the service learning experience. There was a minor disagreement on whether it was important for students to share their results with colleagues. Faculty commented on how students had an opportunity for real learning about life and work and how it reinforced the concepts learned in the classroom. The challenges for faculty included allowing sufficient time to complete the work associated with the service learning experience.

Community partners were in agreement that the experience helped their agencies meet their goals, that new partnerships may be important in the future, and students developed civic responsibility. There was minor disagreement when it came to deciding if the experience was a benefit to the agency, if it was it a way to meet agency needs, and if it was a valuable experience for clients. Community partners reflected that improved communication between the parties involved with the service learning experience would result in a thorough understanding of the

goals and objectives for the experience. Challenges also involved developing appropriate projects, time to supervise the projects, and the limited timeframe that students had to offer.

The recommendations that will be made to the Director of the Service Learning program at MWCC are the following:

1. The program, overall, is an excellent one.
2. As a whole, the stakeholders reflect very positively on the program.
3. Communication between all involved in the service learning program needs to be monitored to insure that the goals for the experience are clearly understood by the participants.
4. Community partners expressed a concern over the development of appropriate projects. A meeting of community partners, faculty, and students at the college for a brainstorming session is recommended.
5. Students indicated the importance of good communication and time management skills. During the process to explain the service learning experience, it might be helpful to include a discussion about these two topics prior to the student participating in this experience.
6. Since the tasks involved in the service learning experience are time consuming for faculty and faculty are now facing a course increase, it may be important for faculty, community partners, and the Director of the Service Learning program to discuss how this might impact the program.

Appendix J

Evaluation Form

I _____ have read the summary of the evaluation for the Service Learning program at MWCC.

❑ I agree with the findings

❑ I disagree with the findings

Comments:

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____ _____

Participant's Name Date Signed

Appendix K

Summary of Findings Presented to the Summative Committee

To: Summative Committee Participant

From: Carol Reed, Researcher

Subject: Summary of the Evaluation

Date: October 25, 2000

The purpose of this memo is to ask you to validate the findings, which used the previously established criteria and validate the evaluation process. Please return the validation and consent forms no later than November 1, 2000. A stamped, self-addressed envelope is enclosed for your convenience in returning the forms. If the forms are not received by that date, it will be believed that you agree that the process used is valid. Should you have any questions about this process, please feel free to contact me at 978-632-6600 extension 226.

The evaluation of the Service Learning program at MWCC was to determine how well the program objectives were being met. For purposes of this evaluation, the word objective is defined as a standard or criteria upon which a decision can be made. We defined the criteria based on the literature review, other models, and formative and summative committee review and modify cycles. Based on those criteria, a questionnaire was designed.

The steps used in the evaluation process included random selection of students and community partners to complete and return the questionnaire, which had been designed in an earlier study. Since the number of faculty who had completed the service learning experience was less than the number of students and community partners, all faculty were selected so that the sample sizes of each group would be as equitable as possible. Three attempts were made to obtain the highest rate of return. In total, students returned 8 questionnaires or 40%, faculty returned 14 questionnaires or 87%, and community partners returned 12 questionnaires or 60%. The results obtained from the questionnaire were collected, analyzed, and summarized. The tables, which are attached to this memo, reflect the collection and summarization of data from the questionnaire.

The analysis included that the stakeholders believed the program to be valid and worthwhile. Students were able to identify an increased awareness of diverse populations and that time management and communication skills were of importance. Faculty reflected that the experience allowed the student to participate in real learning about life and work. Course curriculum had practical application. This type of learning experience takes up additional time on the part of the faculty member. Community partners indicated that communication needed to be clear between all parties involved in the experience. They reflected that students were able to work with individuals whom they might come in contact with once fully employed.

The recommendations that will be made to the Director of the Service Learning program at MWCC are the following:

1) The program, overall, is an excellent one.
2) As a whole, the stakeholders reflect very positively on the program.
3) Communication between all involved in the service learning program needs to be monitored to insure that the goals for the experience are clearly understood by the participants.
4) Community partners expressed a concern over the development of appropriate projects. A meeting of community partners, faculty, and students at the college for a brainstorming session is recommended.
5) Students indicated the importance of good communication and time management skills. During the process to explain the service learning experience, it might be helpful to include a discussion about these two topics prior to the student participating in this experience.
6) Since the tasks involved in the service learning experience are time consuming for faculty and faculty are now facing a course increase, it may be important for faculty, community partners, and the Director of the Service Learning program to discuss how this might impact the program.

Based on the findings as described above, please comment on whether you believe that this has been a valid evaluation process. If you so believe, please place a check mark next to the word "Yes". If you do not believe so, please place a check mark next to the word "No." Regardless of which box you have checked, please make any additional comments next to the word "Comments". Thank you for taking your time.

Appendix L

Consent Form

MEMO

TO: Summative Committee Members

FROM: Carol B. Reed

SUBJECT: Invitation to Participate

DATE: October 25, 2000

You are being invited to participate in a project to evaluate the service learning program at Mount Wachusett Community College. You are being asked to participate because of your expertise in this area. The time frame for this project is approximately October 25, 2000 through October 31, 2000. It is expected that you will need to review the summary of the evaluation. It should take about one hour in length. All review can be done through the mail.

Participation in this study is voluntary. You may withdraw from this project whenever you desire. There is no compensation for participating. There is also no risk for you to participate. All information obtained through the review process is strictly confidential. To further protect your identify, any publications from this study will be written without identifying information. It is understood that the protection of your identity is regarded as an issue of the utmost importance by the researcher and that your anonymity is safeguarded.

_____ _____

Participant's Signature Date

_____ _____

Investigator's Signature Date

Appendix M

Validation Form

This is a valid evaluation process

- ❑ Yes
- ❑ No

Comments

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Signature: Carol B Reed	Printed Name/Position/Title: DrCarol B Reed Associate Professor	
Organization/Address: MWCC 444 Green St Gardner MA 01440	Telephone: 978-632-6605 x226	Fax:
	E-mail Address: C-reed@MWCC.Mass.edu	Date: 10/23/03

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